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44. Bulgaria's "Great Leap Forward"

On the heels of Khrushchev's 21st CPSU Congress dictum that socialist countries must achieve communism simultaneously, and that the prerequisites would be created in the socialist countries at accelerated tempos, the 15-17 January 1959 Bulgarian CP Central Committee plenum called for a far-reaching reorganization and decentralization of the Bulgarian state. The former 12 regions and 117 districts have been amalgamated into 30 new regions which will direct all political, state, economic, and cultural activities. Half of the existing ministries (those concerned with economic matters) have been abolished and their operational functions assumed by the regional units. To increase the labor force, the reorganization calls for the introduction of communal institutions such as public kitchens, laundries, baths and creches. These innovations, by extending regime controls into family life, will mean increased regimentation. The fact that the Bulgarian reorganization is more extensive than the analogous 1956 Soviet changes can be imputed to the established predilection of the Bulgarian leaders for Stalinism. Vulko Chervenkov, an unregenerate Stalinist and still-dominant figure in the Bulgarian CP, headed a delegation to Red China in September-October 1958. Chervenkov's statements after his return from China indicate that he had been favorably impressed by the Chinese adherence to the Stalinist "hard-line." The sequence of developments following Chervenkov's return from China indicate that his thinking once more prevailed in the Central Committee, this time with the result of launching the program in a traditional Bulgarian-Stalinist manner with a number of Chinese overtones.

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45. Soviet Pressure on Iran

Soviet-Iran talks concerning a non-aggression pact ended in an atmosphere of mutual distrust. According to Iran, the Soviets insisted that Iran refrain from signing a bilateral defense agreement with the U.S. The Soviets accuse Iran of yielding to U.S. pressure. Regardless of some aspects of the controversy, the contrast in tone between subsequent Iranian and Soviet statements has been striking. Iran has been mild, unprovocative, dignified; the Soviets have been bullying, threatening, blustering. An example of this is Khrushchev's Tula speech on 18 February. He said the Shah, on his "rotten throne", was afraid of his own people, cited the fate of the Iraqi monarch, and threatened to take the Soviet case directly to the Iranian people. This aggressive attitude toward Iran has numerous parallels in history. The Soviets have several times attempted to extend their system of Caucasian "republics" into Iranian territory, using subversive tactics backed up by military occupation. Absorption of Iran has been a major goal of Soviet policy for 40 years.

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Following the cessation of hostilities between the French and the Vietnamese in Indochina in 1954, the Geneva Agreements were signed (with Great Britain and the USSR as co-signators and France signing on behalf of Vietnam and Laos) delineating certain conditions to be carried out by the Associated States of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam and establishing the International Control Commissions (ICC), with representation from India, Poland, and Canada, within the three states as supervisory agencies. In July 1958, the Lao Government requested that the ICC be adjourned and leave Laos, since Laos had successfully completed its obligations under the treaty. On 11 February 1959, Prime Minister PHOUI Sananikone announced that the Government of Laos considered the terms of the Geneva Agreements satisfactorily completed and that Laos would henceforth depend upon the UN as guarantor of its independence and freedom. The Lao action, in July, inspiring the adjournment of the ICC evoked a storm of criticism from the Communists, and Vietnamese Communists have since attempted to provoke border incidents which could lead to the recall of the ICC to Laos. The recent action by the Lao Government has evoked strong antagonistic reaction from Peking and Moscow. The declaration was issued primarily to counter Communist pressure for the reactivation of the ICC and to free Laos from the anachronistic provision of the Geneva Agreement, which infringed on Lao sovereignty.

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Walter Ulbricht, Secretary General of the Central Committee of the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany -- now the Communist Party of East Germany) was born in Leipzig on 30 June 1893 and in his youth worked as a carpenter. A member of the Socialist Party from 1912 through 1917 he joined the Communist Party (KPD) in 1918 and became a member of its Central Committee in 1923. In the mid-1920s he became the KPD representative to the Executive Committee of the Comintern and in 1926 attended the Lenin School in Moscow. From 1928 to 1933 he was a member of the German Reichstag, for a part of which period he was jailed for Communist activity. From 1933 to 1938 Ulbricht was a Communist activist in Czechoslovakia, and briefly, a Political Commissar in the Spanish Civil War. From 1939 to 1945 he was active in Russia where he acquired Russian citizenship and became a protege of Stalin. During this period he led the formation of the "Free Germany" Committee, headed the Political Department of the KPD in Moscow, and acted as the authority over prisoner exchanges from Germany to the Soviet Union, supervising their selection, political training and "re-education" as potential office-holders for the "New Germany." In May 1945 he returned in the train of the Red Army to Berlin where he organized the political structure and administration of East Germany, first through the KPD, and then in 1946 through the pseudo "popular Front", the SED of which he became the Secretary General in 1950 and thus the political and governmental chief of East Germany. He is mocked for aping Lenin in appearance, especially for his beard. He is feared by the SED members and the population alike for his utter ruthlessness and fanatical ambition.

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48. The Communist World Youth Festival

The Austrian Government in March 1958 approved the request for permission to hold the Seventh World Youth Festival in Vienna from July 26 to August 4. This will be the first time a communist youth festival has been held outside the Soviet bloc. The Austrian Government's favorable decision was partially motivated by a desire not to antagonize the USSR in view of the then imminent Austrian-Soviet negotiations on revising Austrian reparation payments. The Permanent Commission of the IPC is headed by World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) functionary Jean Garcia. Eleven of its twenty-eight members are Soviet or Satellite citizens or members of the communist-controlled WFDY or International Union of Students (IUS). The Festival is ostensibly being organized by the Permanent Commission for the Seventh World Youth Festival. In fact, Festival arrangements are being stage-managed by the WFDY and IUS. Non-communist Austrian student groups have strongly protested and agitated against the Austrian government's approval of the Festival. These groups have posted billboard protests in Vienna and mailed thousands of protest memoranda (copies of which have been sent to the field) to youth and student groups throughout the world. They plan to hold a 7 March 1959 protest demonstration in Vienna. The Vienna Die Presse in January 1959 carried a series of anti-Festival articles and editorials (copies of which have been sent to the field). The Festival organizers reportedly have standby plans to move the Festival to Prague if necessary. About 20,000 youths and students will attend the Festival, the majority coming from non-bloc countries.

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The Cyprus accord has brought promise of stability to a troubled area and marked improvement of relations between Greece and Turkey. The Free World hails it as a concrete step toward regional harmony, but the Soviets are annoyed. Soviet and satellite propaganda says the accord is a device to make Cyprus a NATO military base in defiance of its people's wishes. The settlement is in harmony with the "Balkan Pact" which engaged Greece and Turkey, together with Yugoslavia, to settle differences peacefully and in accordance with the U. N. Charter. This pact, which also provides for mutual defense arrangements and economic and social co-operation among the three countries, is an anathema to the Soviets because it associates a Communist country with NATO nations (one of which is also a Baghdad Pact member) and sets a bad example for the satellites. The pact has been largely non-operative between Greece and Turkey during the bitter Cyprus dispute. A Yugoslav spokesman has endorsed cooperation with Greece and Turkey in political, cultural and economic fields embodied in the treaty signed in 1953 but opposed renewal of the "Bled agreement" of 1954 which established a military alliance. Although the Cyprus accord should give the pact new vitality, the outlook is marred by the current propaganda dispute between Turkey and Yugoslavia. During the Cyprus dispute the U. S. refrained from supporting either Greece or Turkey; the settlement is a true compromise, arrived at without big-power pressure. Tito's visit to Greece in early March may provide a basis for further Balkan Pact cooperation.

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